

At the least the Bourbons might have been deprived of the revenge they sought for in taking some of the best blood of France. Better for Key and his comrades to have fallen in a last struggle before Paris than to be shot by Frenchmen emboldened by the presence of foreign troops.

Talleyrand, the most prominent figure among the statesmen, was away. His absence at Vienna during the first Restoration was undoubtedly the cause of many of the errors then committed. His ability as displayed under Napoleon has been much exaggerated, for, as the Duke of Wellington said, it was easy enough to be Foreign Minister to a Government in military possession of Europe, but at least he was above the petty trivialities and absurdities of the Bourbon Court. On the receipt of the news of the landing of Napoleon he really seems to have believed that the enterprise would immediately end in disaster, and he pressed on the outlawing of the man who had overwhelmed him with riches, and who had, at the worst, left him when in disgrace in quiet possession of all his ill-gotten wealth. But, as the power of Napoleon became more and more displayed, as perhaps Talleyrand found that the Austrians were not quite so firm as they wished to be considered, and as he foresaw the possible chances of the Orleans family, he became rather lukewarm in his attention to the King, to whom he had recently been bewailing the hardships of his separation from his loved monarch. He suddenly found that, after a Congress, the first duty of a diplomatist was to look after his liver, and Carlsbad offered an agreeable retreat where he could wait till he might congratulate the winner in the struggle.

Louis deeply resented this conduct of his Foreign Minister, and when Talleyrand at last joined him with all his doubts resolved, the King took the first opportunity of dismissing him, leaving the calm Talleyrand for once stuttering with rage. Louis soon, however, found that he was not the free agent he believed. The Allies did not want to have to again replace their puppet on the throne, and they looked on Talleyrand and Fondie* as the two necessary men. Talleyrand was re-instated immediately, and remained for some time at